



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## MAYOR JERRY SANDERS FACT SHEET

### **ANONYMOUS CITIZEN FUNDS FIRE PIT PROGRAM** *MAYOR URGES SAN DIEGANS TO FOLLOW EXAMPLE OF DONOR*

Mayor Jerry Sanders today announced that a single donor has pledged \$259,500 to fund the city's 186 fire pits for the next 18 months.

The donation is the first received by the city's Fire Pit Fund, which was set up when the fire pit program faced elimination because of the city's midyear budget deficit.

Mayor Sanders urged citizens and corporations that want to preserve the fire pit program to contribute or hold fundraisers for the Fire Pit Fund.

If enough money is raised by December 2009, Mayor Sanders will be able to recommend another year of funding for the program when he proposes the city's fiscal year 2011 budget.

The benefactor asked that his identity not be revealed to the public. His donation will be administered by the San Diego Foundation.

In conversations with the mayor's office, the donor said he is not a frequent user of the fire pits himself, but that he wanted every child to be able to know the joys of a bonfire on the beach.

The fire pit program was eliminated among numerous steps approved by the City Council to close a \$43 million budget gap.

The annual cost to the city's Parks and Recreation Department to service the fire pits -- which are located in Mission Bay and on the beaches of La Jolla, Mission Beach, Pacific Beach and Ocean Beach -- is \$173,000.

That cost is primarily due to the need to clean the fire pits of ash and debris at least once a week to protect the health and safety of beach users. The cleaning process requires two employees, using a front loader and a dump truck, and takes an average of 30 minutes for each fire pit. The pits measure 16" by 60" by 15" and weigh 1,954 pounds.

The city began removing the fire pits Wednesday, Dec. 10, but stopped soon after the donor pledged to fund the program through the end of this fiscal year and for all of fiscal year 2010.

The donor made no commitment to fund the fire pits beyond June 2010, leaving it to the citizens of San Diego to step forward if they want to continue the program.

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